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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000425

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [KPAO](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#) [UK](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQ: TURKISH DAILY CLAIMS KIRKUK TO BE HANDED
OVER TO KURDS

REF: ANKARA 352

Classified By: Ambassador Eric S. Edelman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is an urgent action request. Please see para. 4.

[1](#)2. (U) The Jan. 26 edition of the Turkish daily "Milliyet" ran a story claiming that the U.S., the UK, the IIG, and Iraqi Kurds have reached a secret deal under which Kirkuk will come under Kurdish control following Jan. 30 elections. The article stated that under this agreement, elections for both a new Governorate Council as well as a referendum on whether Kirkuk should move under KRG control will be held in the province about 11 months after Jan. 30 elections. The right to vote will be accorded to 108,000 Kurdish families who have moved to Kirkuk. The article implies that in essence the modalities for the process outlined under Article 58 of the TAL have already been replaced by this secret agreement. The paper quotes PUK leader Jelal Talabani as saying "We have taken a written guarantee." Similar, less extreme stores appeared throughout the Turkish press.

[1](#)3. (C) This report is false--as is common in the Turkish press--but it merits attention as it will feed both official and popular paranoia about Kirkuk and adversely affect the Turks' already-shaky faith in the TAL's Article 58 process.

[1](#)4. (U) Action request: Post plans to use the following points actively to refute these articles, unless we hear otherwise by OOB (local time) Jan. 27 (these are points largely drawn from the Spokesman's statement on Kirkuk of Jan. 13):.

--There is no agreement, secret or otherwise, under which the IIG, HMG, the USG, or any other entity plans to "hand over" control of the Kirkuk region to Iraqi Kurds or any other group.

--The United States supports the full implementation of the Transitional Administrative Law, including Article 58 related to Kirkuk.

--Article 58 outlines a clear process under which the Iraqi Transitional Government will address this issue.

--Efforts to remedy the unjust policies of the Saddam government in and around Kirkuk, which included the forced deportation of residents, confiscation of property and the manipulation of administrative boundaries, are internal issues for Iraqis to decide.

--Irresponsible and inaccurate reporting such as this undermines the Turkish people's right to know the truth about Iraq and the efforts of the Iraqi people to determine their future.

[1](#)5. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.

EDELMAN